1:Campbell E-5 (1954-1955)1964
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folklorists and historians struggled with patriotic inventiveness to provide historical and ethnological evidence for the advance or validation of their various national frontiers in areas which under the unity imposed by the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires had become an inextricable patchwork of different ethnic and religious groups. The Sarakatsani were one element in this complex pattern. For under Turkish rule their seasonal migrations had led many of them across limits that were later to become the frontiers of Greece, with Albania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Turkey.

In these debates the Greeks and their supporters present the more convincing argument. They suggest that if the Sarakatsani were recently hellenized Koutsovlachs they would preserve at least some traces of a foreign origin in their language and customs. But Höeg has shown[11] that neither phonetically, nor in terms of grammatical structure, are there traces of Koutsovlach elements in the dialect spoken by the Sarakatsani. He also claims that the dialects of the Sarakatsani in Epirus, Macedonia, and Thessaly present a linguistic unity.[12] If the various groups of Sarakatsani had, indeed, been recently hellenized one would have expected them to speak the local dialect of the province in which they now find their grazing lands; and this is not the case. And he properly adds to these linguistic arguments information about the different marriage customs of the two groups.[13]

Where Höeg has used linguistic and ethnographic criteria, Mme Chatzimichalis also emphasizes the unity of Sarakatsan art forms,[14] which are simple, static, and geometric, do not vary from one province to another, and in the absence of naturalistic expression differ radically from those of the Koutsovlachs.

But the rebuttals by both these authors of the opinion that Sarakatsani are hellenized Koutsovlachs are only the preliminaries to their own more general theory that the Sarakatsani are the direct descendants of shepherd communities of preclassical Greece—a claim which it is equally difficult to prove

[11] Höeg, op. cit., vol. i, p. 78.
[12] Ibid., vol. i, preface, p. VIII.
[13] Ibid., vol. i, p. 81.
[14] Chatzimichalis, op. cit., vol. i, Part A, p. ρς'.

585 292 fustanella and tights, and, disappointingly, pointed black towny shoes. His face, rather a commonplace one for a Sarakatsán, was a mask of confused virile seriousness. In only one thing did his [531] outfit differ from the full-dress Greek mountain costume: black woolen armlets, embroidered with specifically Sarakatsán geometric zigzags, encased his forearms below the wide white sleeves which ended at his elbow.

585 Despite the chaos in the church, the marriage service evolved unperturbed. The two enormous ribboned candles were held by minute shepherd boys, like the lances of heraldic supporters, on either side of a little altar in the body of the nave. The *koumbaros* switched the flimsy white flower crowns from head to head in a succession of intricate passes and arranged and rearranged their hands and bound them with ribbon and performed yet more complex manipulations with the ring, and followed them in kissing the bossy silver binding of the proffered missal. Finally he accompanied them, hand in hand, led by the priest under a fusillade of flung rice and sweets, in a slow and dignified dance thrice around the altar. This is a kind of hieratic pavane, which more than any other moment in the solemnization (for the wine that the priest offers to the bridal couple is no more than a commemoration of the wedding at Cana of Galilee) hallows and confirms the sacrament.

Out in the sunlight, all was levity, flourished banners, and gunfire again. We made our way through the wigwams to the house which the groom's father, striking modern roots in his winter pastures, had recently built. As the newly wed couple reached the threshold, someone handed the groom a sieve, which he threw over his shoulder, a measure which is said to forfend marital discord. They both kissed the hand of the groom's father and laid it to their foreheads for a second and [123] vanished indoors. My new friend of yesterday, [576] Barba Petro, introduced us to this pastoral dynast, who welcomed us with the same graceful inclination, with his hand laid on his breast, and led us in.

[352] There were already plenty of guests there, both on the low divan which ran around the room and cross-legged on the mats which padded the floor; [539] and at each new arrival, while black-swathed aunts and grandmothers offered the newcomers saucers with a spoonful of jam, a glass of water, and a thimbleful of raki, they intoned a welcoming song: "Mother, our friends have come," they sang, "our bidden guests. Bid them welcome with [516] honey and sugar and with golden words." Some sat with hands linked around their doubled-up

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[p.79-B]

600 Byron's Haidée and the Maid of Athens are, in fact, pretty near the mark.

585 All was different here. Not only was there no
292 silk, satin, velvet, or gold braid from the West
[298] and the Levant, but hardly a stitch which came
[531] from anywhere but the backs of their flocks and their prehistoric-looking looms, and complex though the costume was, there was not a single foliating curve or circle or ellipse, nothing swaying
[301] or branching or interweaving or flowering. The only rounded things were the chains of necklaces, the gold Napoleons, Turkish sequins, and gold talers that hung around the bride's neck. Another latter-day curvilinear afterthought to the angular whole, and one which was common to both the bride and her retinue, was a wide white goffered or crocheted circular collar like a flattened, hidalgo's ruff, ending at the shoulder in scallops. The complex headdress of flowers and stiff muslin and the veil which hung down the bride's back had the extraneous and charming air of votive adornments attached to a processional statue on a Calabrian or Andalusian feast day. From a rosette over each of her ears a long cluster of ribbons hung; they framed her face like the pendants on the diadem of the Empress Theodora at Ravenna.

But, apart from these festival trimmings, all was made up of stern black and white lines and angles, and so broad and solid seeming were the black white-banded pleats that if any of the girls made a movement, her heavy and unwieldy clothes moved as unpliantly as armor. The aprons, which reached their knees, were as stiff as stoles or heralds' tabards, their tunics were as rigid as dalmatics, and nothing bore any relationship to conventional ideas of the human shape. The costumes were related to the curvature and the jointing of the human body as arbitrarily as are the plates of a metal fish to its prototype, the sections of a toy wooden snake, or the laminations of a samurai's armor.
[301] Their forearms and legs were encased in geo-
[531] metrically patterned armlets and greaves, and the bride's wrists were aclank with heavy bracelets, and all, strangely and touchingly, were shod in stout flat-heeled walking shoes. (Their mothers would have worn pomponned *tsarouchia*.) It was hard to determine, therefore, why these
[531] clothes appeared so beautiful. They exerted, it finally dawned on us, the peculiar captivation of

[p. 79-C]

585 292 531 ancient Greek vases of the geometric period, for every design was made up of straight lines and triangles, with here and there an inchoate beginning of those patterns of white crosses on a black ground, and black on white, that cover the vestments of frescoed prelates on the wall of a narthex. All was angular: triangles mounting in pyramids or shooting diagonally in zigzags and sawteeth and staircases with, very seldom, here and there, a small and subtly placed triangle or chevron, among the dominating black and white, of pale ocher, or terra-cotta, or a deadened blue. "Geometric" and "neolithic" were the epithets which began to float to the surface of the mind, bringing with them the excitement of the thought that these clothes and these designs might not have changed for three thousand years or more. One knows that these thoughts must be suppressed until they can be confirmed by research. But such dalliance is always stimulating. It was backed here by the certainty that nothing like these clothes exists in Greece or in the Balkan Peninsula or in Europe.

142 [302] The bride's face, with the blue cross on her forehead under black hair as coarse and lustrous as a stallion's tail and the stiff linen coif with its load of baubles and flowers, was burned a deep bronze. It had the metallic, wide-browed, heavy-lidded beauty, the slightly sad mouth, the clear line of jaw from chin to ear, and, springing from its flattened ruff and its stomacher of coins, the strong columnar neck which I admired so much, a few years ago, among the Mayas of the Honduranean and Guatemaltecan jungles. Obsidian, chalcedony, and basalt would have been the stones in which to carve those features and that still and melancholy posture. It is a type of looks which has an arresting distinction, a Gauguin-limbed strength at variance with the slender Tanagra delicacy that seems to have left an indelible stamp on Western ideas of grace and style.

585 [534] There was no time for more of these cogitations. The deep reedy blast of a clarinet sounded under the window; then, after a few twiddles, a violin and the twanging of a lute and a tentative fluttering tinkle of hammers over the wires of a zither. "Ah, the instruments," Uncle Petro said, "at last!" [533] I asked Petro if the musicians were Sarakatsáns. [648] He looked at me in surprise. "Sarakatsáns? We only play the flute. They are Gypsies." And so they were, very dark ones, lined up outside under a tree in blue suits, wearing pointed black shoes and ties, the only ties for miles, and looking sleek and urban among these other nomads. There was a crunch of hobnails up the stairs as the

585 long chain of the dancers. Their pace subsided
535 to a ritual shuffle. There is nothing unusual in this; with a few exceptions, Greek dances, however many people may be joined hand in hand, are in effect solos — everything devolves on the leader, and each dancer, when his turn comes, fulfills the temporary role of coryphaeus. The job of the others, and especially of his immediate neighbor, to whom he is linked by a handkerchief, is to support him in his convolutions, and these are astonishing when a real mountain dasher is in the lead. But today, even after the first bridal saraband, the Dionysiac zest seemed to abandon the others when they linked hands. The dominance of form in the life of these nomads began to dawn on us.

595 Outside this semicircle, however, all was rejoicing. Staidness evaporated on release, and scores of young nomads were carousing and reeling under
[535] the branches. Squatting or standing among the wigwams, rings of geometrical women confabulated or sang together, and there was even an ex-
[283] clusive little ellipse of dancing women. Their gatherings were abristle — like those of the men with their crooks — with the carved distaffs tucked in their belts, all cloudy with rough hanks of raw wool, the spindles rising and falling at the end
[834] of their twirling threads. Some of the younger of these spinning squaws had wooden cradles slung papooselike on their backs, each containing
[533] a miniature nomad. Their songs had the same epic themes, laced with lament, as those of the men. The murmur of their talk was broken, again and again, with peals of laughter.

The Sarakatsánissas, usually so silent in the

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[p.81-A]

pair then retired to a hut, and to the hilarity of all, comic simulacra of considerable indecency were enacted within. But the groom was found wanting and thrown out; candidate after candidate entered with apparent promise, and each one in turn was ejected in disgrace. A fitting champion was discovered at last, and during a final mime of triumphant bawdiness, the entire company danced around the hut singing "The Pepper Song," the dancers alternately banging their noses and their rumps on the ground with a seesaw motion I would give much to observe.

The feast of St. George is the most propitious for christenings, and babies born immediately afterward often have to wait for a year to be baptized. But they are always named at once, and should they fall ill, they are given a lay baptism on the spot, lest they should die and turn into little vampires. The average family varies between five and fifteen children. Random fornication, adultery, divorce, rape, and bastardy are unknown, and should a case of bastardy ever crop up, death to all concerned is the only remedy. This is not only for reasons of morality, for these ill-starred children are thought to be Satan personified; they bring a curse on the huts, and should one grow up and die a natural death, a ghost rises

[p. 84-A]

/38 cont./

283 Equipment related to weaving and wool

This equipment includes:

The distaff: there are two kinds of distaffs found among the Sarakatsani.

[824] The first is merely a tree branch 60 centimeters long which ends in a three-pronged fork onto which the tuft of wool is fastened (fig. 23).

/39/ The second is made up of two parts: first, a branch of the same length as that we have described makes up the vertical part of the distaff; a small, board fastened perpendicularly to the preceding part forms a cross read to receive the tuft (fig. 24 and 25).

[531]

Fig. 24

Fig. 25

/54 cont./

286 Finally, there are /55/ the karanelotti blankets, which have
53 colored geometric designs. (13) They are woven with six heddles,
and consequently with the same number of treadles: moreover, several
[171] shuttles loaded with multicolored wefts are used (14) (fig. 40).

13. The French blankets called "Pyrenees" looked similar.

14. A. Leroi-Gourhan, in L'homme et la matière, p. 306, gives an excellent description of the technique of weaving geometric forms from a loom provided with several heddles. We have nothing to add to it.

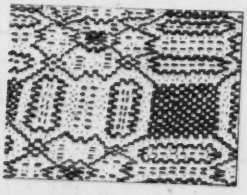

Fig. 40

286 Fulling.

All the wool fabrics, as well as the blankets and rugs, must, before being used, undergo another procedure which consists of exposing them to the action of water in order to give them a certain finish.

Thanks to fulling, they tighten and become firm; and "flokotti," owe their furry appearance to this procedure.

Fulling is carried out either in a fulling mill or by means of a mandani.

The fulling mill consists chiefly of an artificial waterfall placed above a large wooden trough sunk in the ground. All the blankets (except the karamelotti), all the rugs and all the garments made from the wool of goats are put into this tub; then the sluice is opened

/Men's Apparel/

291 around the waist, and did not offer anything unusual. The other, very wide, which had several pockets on it was called "siliachi." These pockets served as pocketbook, fob, case for weapons, tools, even implements, etc.

8th. There were several variations of the vest worn over the the shirt. First, a simple vest, very short and without sleeves, of [531] which the two edges of the opening were ornamented respectively with a row of buttons and buttonholes that had no practical use since only the first button was buttoned; in addition, it /the vest/ was decorated with a certain number of embroidered motifs.

291 In the second instance there was the twill vest which, of course, 531 was buttoned; it was also ornamented with embroidered motifs. Finally, the "ferméli" consisted of the formal vest. Embroidered all over, this vest of silk was even made with a lining, likewise of silk; hung open false sleeves which began at the shoulders hung at the back, thus forming a supplementary decorative element.

Depending on the type, these vests were all black or dark blue.

291 9th. The head gear which completed this costume could be either a fez or a black cap.

/101/ Formerly, this clothing, which was the usual apparel was worn both on holidays and for daily work. Moreover, the degree of richness and beauty of this outfit was a means of distinguishing the social rank of the one who wore it. It is therefore obvious that the outfit of the chief had to be the most beautiful, the most opulent and the most ornate.

291 As a matter of fact, the traditional apparel has nearly been 198 given up. Only some old men living in remote regions continue to wear it in a simplified form. Their vests, for example, are no longer ornamented, and their fez has been permanently replaced by a cap [294] (fig. 79). Moreover, the artisan-tailors who, in former times, made these outfits, have also almost completely disappeared.

[191] For about the last fifty years the Sarakatsani have adopted the

A, [Fig. 79 appears on p. 117--Analyst]

/Women's Apparel/

/103 cont./

29 [531] 1st The previously mentioned "tsarouchia", likewise ornamented with pompons though considerably smaller ones than those of the men.

2nd "Stockings" (fig. 87) that cover the legs only to the knee. [531] These stockings are knitted in geometric motifs, but only in black on white.

3rd By way of underclothing the women wear in winter a pair of pants stopping at the knees and woven of goat hair, to protect them from the cold, especially when they are obliged to cross streams on foot.

4th A wool undershirt protects the bust. On top of this undershirt they wear a very short shirt (it reaches to the hips) made of a cotton fabric. It has relatively short sleeves, that are very full and pleated. The scantiness of this shirt constitutes a health measure. If it were longer, the lower part would be in danger of becoming wet during the crossing of streams; now, drying next to the skin could cause serious health problems.

[531] 5th The dress proper includes: a very wide skirt falling to the feet, pleated and decorated with white embroidery in geometric designs. This skirt is fastened at the waist by a leather belt (fig. 88).

[531] 6th A bib, likewise embroidered with geometric motifs, as a rule black on white, protects the chest and reaches down to the waist (fig. 86).

7th From the wrist to the elbows the forearms are covered with "stockings" identical with the stockings that protect the legs.

8th The vest, three varieties of which we have described, is also a part of the women's apparel, but only in two forms. On the one hand, there is a simple black vest, which does not button in front /104/ /Women's Apparel Figs. 84-88 appear here/ /105/ thus leaving the bib showing and, on the other hand, a longer vest the back of which is ornamented with two false sleeves embroidered and open, starting at the shoulders. It is rather a kind of short coat, as its name also suggests: "kontokapa" (fig. 85).

9th An ornamental collar, pleated and likewise embroidered, completes the dress. /Fig. 89 appears here/

3: Kabbadias--119 E-4,5 [no date] 1965 EH14 Sarakatsani EH14

/104/

Women's Apparel

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[142]

Fig. 84

Fig. 86

Fig. 87

Fig. 85

Fig. 88

/Women's Apparel/

/105 cont./

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Fig. 88

291 10th On the head the women wear a veil the color of which, as well as the manner of knotting it changes according to circumstances and the individual status. As a rule, the young girls wear white veils up to the age of 18 years. After that age the veil is printed with white flowers on a black background. Only the women in mourning and old women wear black veils. /106/

(531)
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[888]

301 11th In order to conclude the presentation of the women's apparel it is suitable also to enumerate the ornaments: first the necklace which, in most cases, is made up of several strands of gold coins. Then come the earrings, the jewelry ornamenting the head veil, the brooch for the collarette, all of silver.

Moreover, the belt is closed with a clasp made of two pieces of engraved solid silver which sometimes weighs several kilograms. Finally, silver chains crossing the chest are embellished with multi-

/Women's Apparel/

/106 cont./

colored precious stones (fig. 84).

This outfit is worn for festivals and weddings.

Of course, the everyday dress, the dress for work, is much simpler, although the principal features are scarcely different from those we have described. The difference is limited chiefly to the relative absence of emboidery, jewelry or the silver buckle (see fig. 89).

Moreover, the work outfit includes a scarf, a shawl made of a rectangular "flokotti," some 1.50 meters long,

Fig. 90

/107/ preferably black which is worn over the shoulders and serves as a cloak enveloping the body (fig. 90, vélentzoula).

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In addition to these descriptions, and in order to consider Sarakatsani apparel from a technological point of view, it is necessary to emphasize that in general the men's as well as the women's clothing is cut and stitched. However, sometimes the sleeves

/248 cont./

121 842 directly promote fertility, and those, finally, which, though directed toward different ends, indirectly aid fertility. Practices dealing with [233] human beings are in many respects different from those applied to animals But since the ideas and beliefs that determine them are almost the same, we shall study them together.

* * * *

842 The phenomena that call forth the intervention of magic, classed according to cases, are the following, beginning with sterility.

842 262 [825] /249/ In order to avoid it, the Sarakatsani woman and young girl must abstain from eating the meat of a sterile animal, the defect of the latter being considered contagious. On the other hand, if a family is very large it is advisable to give the mother such meat in order to stop her fertility. (1)

1. See B. Skafidas: Ibid., p. 1104.

842 754 Now for the male: under his wedding clothes the husband must keep his soiled drawers, for if this underwear should fall into the hands of his enemies they would use it to practice magic on it and cause his impotence (2)--any object which is even temporarily in contact with someone

2. Ibid., p. 463.

842 825 789 being the best means of transmitting evil to them. Furthermore, the newly married couple wear the head of a viper as an amulet. We shall not dwell on this point, for we shall have occasion, to come back to it. Finally,

233 825 789 as far as the livestock is concerned, it is necessary, in order not to provoke sterility, to be silent about the fertility of animals and above all about the number of animals that have mated, probably because of the "evil eye."

842 Non-sterility having been assured, it is necessary to pass from the negative to the positive, therefore to act appropriately /Fig. 100 appears [531] here/ to promote fertility. First, human fertility: the bottom of the wife's

/249 cont./

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Fig. 100

842 skirt, her bodice, her stockings and her knitted sleeves are bordered
531 with geometric motifs, the predominant one being the cross. The central motif, as well as the secondary motifs surrounding it are variations of the same symbol (see figures 84-87). A The Sarakatsani call them indiscriminately "moons." These same "moons" are found on the wedding pastry
[262] prepared for the wife, but this time in the shape of a four-petal rose of
[585] spirals or interlaced lines in relief (see figure 100). The study of this cake will be the subject of a special paragraph.

844 /250/ A second point to be emphasized concerns childbirth practices.
602 The mother-to-be, assisted by the women of the family (the men must absent themselves at this time), gets on her knees on the ground close to the hearth where a very bright fire is burning. When the child arrives the oldest of the assisting women puts her hand under the skirt of the mother (who does not undress) and receives the child. The placenta, when it has
[783] come out, is removed by the aunt on the father's side, or secondarily by the aunt on the mother's side, and after having been fumigated with incense, is buried behind the hut in a corner where neither men nor impure animals may walk.

A, /See p.119--Analyst/

842 /250 cont./
821 By wearing them or coming in contact with them one benefits from their
823 virtues.
372
825

/251/ In practice all this is interpreted as follows: the decoration
531 of the skirt and the bride's cake serve as the lunar amulets. Giving birth
262 on the ground and in the posture in which the ancient goddess of birth
585 Eilithyia /Artemis/ is shown insures for the child the advantages which
844 come from contact with the earth. (9)
796

9. See B. Nyberg: Kind und Erde, p. 207 f.--Birth by proximity, according to M. Eliade: Ibid., p. 265.--Van der Leeuw: Ibid., p. 119.--Monolina Marconi: Riflessi mediterranei /Mediterranean reflections/, p. 254 f. p. 254 f.--Marie Delacourt: Stérilité, p. 31 f.

844 The placenta which has nourished the child until then returns to the earth
764 where a new life will rise again (10)

10. G. Van der Leeuw: Ibid., p. 45.

(the position of the deceased directly on the ground and his commemoration by means of the grain which is buried and comes to life again symbolize the same life cycle). (11)

11. J. Przyluski: La grande déesse, p. 124 f.--G. Van der Leeuw: Ibid., p. 87.--P.M. Schuhl: La formation de la pensée grecque, p. 211.

372 The healing, invigorating fire which makes mortals immortal and which is
844 born from two pieces of wood representing the two sexes, (12)
842

12. G. Van der Leeuw: Ibid., p. 49, also citing Ad. Kuhn: Die Herabkunft des Feuers und der /sic--should be: des/ Göttertranks, p. 64 f.

protects the mother who gives birth in front of it, as well as the newborn child. (13) Moreover, it encourages a new impregnation by the burial of the

13. W. Mannhardt: Antike Wald und Feldkulte, p. 503.

/256 cont./

solemnly and in a high voice, speaks these words: "May ewes and goats be born." She is offered cakes and extended wishes for a long life and happiness. According to Madame Hadjimichali, the women can predict from the crackling of the fire whether the year ahead will be fruitful or disastrous.

The first day of the Orthodox Advent (40 days before Christmas) a long tree trunk is put in the hearth and allowed to burn for a while. Then it is extinguished and put to one side. This procedure is invariably repeated each morning. On Christmas morning the oldest woman of the family lights what is left and carries it lighted to the stroungha (Fig. 73) A/A where she buries it at the entrance where the animals pass. (24)

24. A practice reported by Madame Hadjimichali (ibid., p. ρν') but that we ourselves have not encountered.

On New Year's day, according to our own observations (on Christmas day according to those of Madame Hadjimichali), (25)

25. Ibid., A. II, pp. 346-350. This difference in the data is not surprising since the Sarakatsani groups are numerous and variations of customs are inevitable as a result of acculturation. It is to be noted that the non-Sarakatsani population make a pastry on New Year's day. It is possible that the statements of Madame Hadjimichali report a state of affairs before our own investigation. In this connection we wish to emphasize that Madame Hadjimichali gives a very fine description of the cakes in question, with superb drawings.

each mother of a family prepares a pastry decorated with motifs in relief, which represent /257/ a stroungha with sheep, imprints of horseshoes, a dog, shepherd reeds, distaffs, vipers and last of all scorpions. The whole is an evocation of the economic life of the Sarakatsani, the stroungha,

A/A, /See p.100--Analyst/

/257 cont./
the dogs and the reed of the shepherd symbolizing herding, the distaff, the wool crafts, the horseshoes, the means of transport and the migrations, the vipers and scorpions, the protective forces.

The complex of ideas and beliefs symbolized by all these practices is clear. As a female who is a virgin, the young girl is the most appropriate being to promote birth, especially the birth of female animals at the very moment when one cycle ends and another begins it for the new year coincides with the period of lambing. The woman, besides, is a tangible force of fertility and is very often found at the center of customs and rites having to do with the fertility of the earth. (26)

26. See G. Van der Leeuw: Ibid., p. 85-86 and material cited by him.

Moreover, she is connected with the moon from which she derives her symbolic virtues. As a result, she is likewise bound up with the waters. (27)

27. Varron: Ling. Lat. 5, 61.--The goddess of fertility is the goddess of the waters.--See J. Przyluski: Ibid., p. 27.--She ruled the elements, held sway over the air and the waters. --See Ch. Picard: Ibid., p. 377.

She is thus charged with pouring butter and cheese into the spring--a libation for abundance, (28) very conveniently connected with the ritual

28. The offerings at springs, pools and water holes are very frequent in different regions of Greece, and are practiced to the same ends as those of the Sarakatsani, see Ph. Koukoules: Ibid., vol. I, part II. p. 274 and his citations.

of Christmas day. It completes the latter and its specific symbolism aims to assure one after another the following ends: fertility, birth of females, productive animals, abundance.

The symbolic efficacy of fire, here in the form of the half-charred log, (29) of grain in the form of the pastry, of the snake and the scorpion

/257 cont./

233 825 789 [171] [842]

29. It is known that in several countries, including Greece, the maypole is burned--a reminiscence of the ritual of the Hilaria festival in Rome, in honor of Attis (a complete description of which is found in E.O. James: Ibid., pp. 205-208), which promotes universal fertility,--M. Eliade: Ibid., p. 264.

233 825 789 262 531 [171]

(underworld forces) is known to us. Even here these entities exert an influence favorable to abundance (30) by /258/ affecting the economic

30. A very fine study of St. Basil's pastry (Greek homologue of the cake of kings prepared in France) and hence of all the ceremonial pastry and bread of Christmas, New Year's day, marriage, etc., in Greece has just been published by the Greek ethnologist D. Doukatos: Η Βασιλόπιτα. A detailed analysis of this custom, accompanied /258/ by commentaries on its significance in promoting well-being, abundance, prosperity, etc., as well as on its origins, and a study comparing it with similar customs of the West clarifies this problem. From the copious bibliography we single out two works: Margaret Hasluck: The Basil-Cake of the Greek New Year /cited in English/, pp. 143-177, and G. Bidault de l'Isle: Vieux dictons de nos compagnes, p. 43-44.

mechanism (the decoration of the pastry and the combination if its motifs constituting an indisputable illustration). We must take into account the

233 825 789 770 527

fact that the magic practices in general fulfill a multiplicity of functions. But two things must still be noted: First, the Sarakatsani, like all Greeks, attach a special importance to the first person who crosses the threshold of the house on New Year's day, for if the person brings luck, the year will be favorable; if he brings ill luck, the year will be disastrous. (31)

[171]

31. This belief, very widespread in Greece, already existed in antiquity: and even

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΟΥ. Deipnosophistæ, VII.

789 /263 cont./
585 the tree of immortality is the vine: M. Eliade: Ibid.,
[191] pp. 247 and 248, "the vine, the plant expression of
immortality--just as the vine in archaic traditions
has remained the symbol of youth and eternal life."
[203] say that this libation gives rise to "health, abundance and good fortune."
[182] Sometimes the bride also pours out water, in order to be always "fresh
[823] as water."

789 However, abundance is further sustained by the snake for the
825 polyvalent symbolism of the latter promotes abundance. Though explicit testimonies are lacking, the facts speak for themselves. It will be recalled that the Sarakatsani have extensive woodcrafts. On all the wooden
789 objects they make are found various decorative motifs, mostly geometric
825 and generally beautiful. Looking at them closely one immediately realizes
322 that the snake, or rather the viper, appears only on the staffs of the
531 shepherds or on the distaffs (fig. 104).[A] It is certain that the handle of
233 the staff, in the shape of a definite and marked curvature, in itself
283 suggests the movement of a snake. But the shape of the distaff calls to mind nothing similar. Moreover, nothing explains the absence of this motif on other objects. Now, it is obvious that the presence of the animal on the staff and the distaff is symbolic much more than it is ornamental. The snake accompanies these objects because they represent the two principal economic activities of the Sarakatsani, herding and wool crafts. If it is agreed that the chthonian forces favor fecundity and fertility, hence abundance, the viper will augment the yield from these two fundamental activities.

777 To complete our discussion of this subject we must still mention the Sarakatsani observances bearing on the propitious days for the performance
777 of certain tasks. Thus, the shearing must never begin on Tuesday. On the
236 other hand, it is altogether advisable to start the shearing on Maundy Thursday by symbolically removing a little wool from a sheep. Maundy

[A] /See p. 429--Analyst/

/327 cont./

796 795 796 795 789 Thursday and move about among the living until Pentecost." Sarakatsani women at that time prepare two bags which they carry to church. The first, "intended for the living," is filled with various objects which must be blessed--tsandilès, small bells, salt, incense, wool of black sheep, painted eggs, wax candles, etc.; it is placed beside the altar (hiéron) during mass. The second /bag/, intended "for the dead," [769] is filled with bread, kolyva (the pastry of the dead made with boiled grain), wine, incense, etc.; it is handed over to the parish priest so that he will conduct a /328/ service for the dead of the family who, as we have said, are present on this day. The bag intended for the living is the more one interesting for this part of our analysis. The objects it contains show the significance of the practice. They are divided into two categories: those that represent the economic life of our herders; those that are destined for spiritual use, so to speak. All these objects will be blessed during the service. Thus, prosperity is assured, since dairy production (symbolized by the tsandilès) and herding (small bells) are blessed; the same is true for births, or rather fecundity, symbolized by the egg. It is necessary to give some details pertaining to the egg of Maundy Thursday. It is an egg laid that very day by a black [527] hen (a color which is presumed to have occult properties). Before being [531] brought to the church it is decorated all over with sinuous designs symbolizing the snake, hence fecundity. The other objects are used for making amulets (salt, incense) or to drive off evil spirits (wax candles that are lit during the exorcisms, etc.).

796 On Good Friday another ritual takes place among the Sarakatsani. On [188] this day the Orthodox Church holds a service and a procession commemorating [533] the descent from the cross, the obsequies and the entombment of Christ; during these the choir sings hymns called "the laments at the tomb" or [533] eulogies. Now, these nomads organize among themselves a "lament for the

/365 cont./

53 intended to answer the aesthetic requirements of these herders it must, at the same time, fulfill important functions. (1)

1. For a parallel study see the bibliography and the comments of G. Balandier in his article "Afrique Noire et Madagascar" in Encyclopédie de la Pléiade, Histoire de l'Art, 1, Le monde non chrètien (1962).

[128] We shall try to consider it in this chapter from this double point of view. Its morphological aspect will necessarily remain in shadow, for it does not enter into the scope of this work.

* * * *

The artistic world of the Sarakatsani is expressed in music (melodies sung or played), poetry (almost always in the form of words to songs), the dance (performed while singing), sculpture in wood, embroidery, narratives and tales.

Its manifestations, in any of these branches, may be classified into two fundamental categories: expressions that are "incorporated" into other aspects of culture, those that are "not incorporated" and the "free."

53 789 [178] The "attached" manifestations are an indissoluble part of the magico-religious ritual and social proceedings. Their subject matter and form are strictly determined by tradition and the ideas that accompany it. No innovation is tolerated, for any change would risk making the ritual ineffective and disrupting the principles of social life. The works of art which correspond to this category are carried out under conditions prescribed in advance and have in view the interests of the group. To /366/ furnish an illustration it is sufficient to recall the 789 533 585 [521] [535] [538] snakes that ornament the /shepherd's/ crook, the distaff and the ritual breads, the embroidered moons, the dances of the dramatic scenes, the verses recited during exorcisms, the phases of the wedding ceremony in

/366 cont./

which songs are the keynote marking the stages of the procedure followed, dictating the sentiments and attitudes which the participants must experience, (2)

2. On the Thursday before the wedding, the girls, relatives of the betrothed couple, set out to gather wood that will be used to bake the wedding cake. And while walking they must sing the following song:

--The little "Rosebush" sets out to cut wood.
--The trees are hard and the girl frail and delicate.
--She wounds her small hand and cuts her little finger.

On Friday evening, at the dwelling of the fiance, the large nuptial flag is made, which is carried at the head of the procession when the latter departs for the dwelling of the fiancee. Here is the song that accompanies this work:

--For whom is this red and white flag?
--It is for the bridegroom, this red and white flag.
--Who makes it and who colors it red?
--His brothers, his sisters (etc.).
--All the cousins of the bridegroom must be there
--All must be armed and all must fire guns
So that the flag will know prosperity...
--Take care, stitch it tight
It will travel over the mountain
It will be torn by brambles
And the mother-in-law (father-in-law) will make fun
Of it.

When the procession is ready to leave with the fiancee, the

/368 cont./

533 [233] recognized that the tunes of the flute do not constitute descriptive music. They have a content of their own, very distinct and autonomous, emanating from the musical disposition of these herders. Proof lies in the fact that the Sarakatsani are very sensitive to the music of the flutes. Madame Hadjimichali reports that while listening to it [152] they sometimes weep. They themselves say that the flute forces the player "to enter into it." Purely descriptive music would not be able to exert such an influence on feeling.

531 532

Fig. 104

Fig. 105

Fig. 106

Sculpture in wood, except for the symbols on crooks and distaffs, is also "free." The motifs engraved on different objects are geometric designs, figures of men and animals and plants subjects. (4)

531 532 114 4. Madame Hadjimichali: Ibid., t. I, vol. II, pp. 359-452, presents a detailed study of the wooden sculpture of the Sarakatsani. In a superb series of photographs and drawings she introduces us to the art of our herders and gives excellent comments on the morphology of the decorated objects. This part [178] of her work is all the more valuable in that it deals

531 /368 cont./
532
114 with an art that has almost entirely disappeared at the
198 present time.

/369/ Finally, it is necessary to mention the non-symbolic woven
538 motifs and the narratives and tales. The latter, works of oral literature, recount stories in which kings, archons, ladies, beautiful girls, sorcerers, evil spirits, ogres, fairies, etc., take an active part and come face to face in intrigues which end in the triumph of good over evil, of the persecuted beauty over the evil sorcerer, of man over evil spirits. (5)

5. C. Höeg: in the work cited reproduces a large number of Sarakatsani tales and narratives.

However, there is another kind of account and narrative which, in addition to their character and the talent of the narrator, show a utilitarian aspect and, on the basis of this fact, belong to the "incorporated" art. In the course of the command feasts organized for the
538 entire family on the occasion of the major holidays, the old men are
596 invited to tell, for the sake of the young generations, stories that extol
887 the conduct of the ancients in all kinds of circumstances. Thus, their
867 descendants find at their disposal models of behavior derived from their ancestors, which will guide them throughout life along the lines dictated and required by tradition. Let us emphasize that this is one of the ways
[626] the extended family, of which we have already spoken, functions to promote social control.

* * * *

53 The origins of the art existing among the Sarakatsani thus vary according to the nature of its manifestations. When it is "incorporated," it is a purely Sarakatsani art. When it is "free" we rediscover cultural
[177] borrowings, songs and motifs coming from other Greek social environments, however without profoundly altering the Sarakatsani artistic style.

/370 cont./

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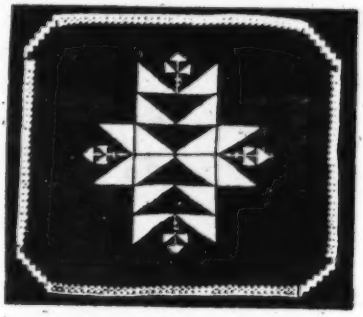

Fig. 107

/371 cont./

53 precisely what the "authorized" sentiments, so to speak, are and the place
152 they occupy in Sarakatsani life.

585 When the bride leaves her paternal hut her attendants perform a song
533 which is supposed to be a dialogue between the girl and her mother:
539 --My rosy apple, where will you take shelter tonight?
152 --You show no tenderness for me,
Why are you interested in my fate?
--I pine away for you
And I shall die if I cannot see you...
--Follow the shore of the sea
You will find three beds
On the one you will see my mother asleep
On the other, my sister,
And on that which is covered with roses
It is I who shall sleep alone...